REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of May 10, 2007 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the three-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. The Office, nonetheless, is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-5 and 10-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,974,928 to Bloom (hereinafter Bloom). Additionally, Claims 1-5 and 10-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the stated rejections, Applicants nonetheless have amended the claims to expedite prosecution of the present application by emphasizing certain aspects of the invention. Applicants respectfully note, however, that the amendments are not intended as a surrender of any subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants reserve the right to present the original version of any of the amended claims in any future divisional or continuation applications from the present application.

Specifically, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 4 to further emphasize certain aspects of the invention. Claim 1 also has been amended to overcome the issue raised at page 2 of the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, by clearly distinguishing two types of notification, namely, an order notification and an activity notification in connection with an initiated transaction. Claim 4 has been similarly amended. As discussed in the following section, the claim amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. No new matter has been introduced by the claim amendments presented herein.

Some Aspects of the Invention

At this juncture, it may be useful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention. One embodiment, typified by Claim 1, is a method for exposing transaction status in a supply chain having disparate systems.

The method can include using a trading partner exchange to electronically receive an order notification corresponding to an order created by a first trading partner system, where the received order notification is associated with a first trading partner system identifier and where the created order defines a transaction between a customer and a first trading partner. In response to receiving the order notification, the trading partner exchange can automatically assign a unique transaction identifier to the transaction.

The trading partner exchange can electronically receive one or more activity notifications indicating an activity performed by at least a second trading partner system. The one or more activity notifications can describe an action of a second trading partner corresponding to the transaction, and they can be associated with a second trading partner system identifier. Moreover, the first trading partner system and at least one second trading partner system can be disparate systems that jointly define a transaction processing chain. In response to receiving the activity notification, the trading partner exchange can automatically associate t he unique transaction identifier to the second trading partner system identifier.

The trading partner exchange can link the unique transaction identifier to the order notification and to one or more activity notifications Cross referencing the first and second trading partner system identifiers using the unique transaction identifier provides a status of the transaction at a point in the transaction processing chain. The trading partner exchange can electronically report the status of the transaction via an integrated access interface.

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Additionally transaction analysis information can be provided to the first, the second, or any other trading partner. The transaction analysis information, more particularly, can be electronically generated by the trading partner exchange based upon the unique transaction identifier, the order notification, and the at least one activity notification. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 9, lines 11 – 21; see also FIG. 2.)

Additionally, access to transaction tracking information can be provided to a customer who initiated the order. In order to enhance security and ensure data integrity, access to tracking information can be provided to the customer while denying the customer access to the transaction analysis information. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 9, line 20 – p. 10, line 3.) Like the transaction analysis information, the transaction tracking information can be electronically generated by the trading partner exchange based upon the unique transaction identifier, the order notification, and the at least one activity notification.

The method further can comprise formatting the transaction analysis information and/or the transaction tracking information in response to selecting one of a plurality of communication channels for conveying the information. More particularly, the formatting can be based upon and correspond to the communication channel selected.

The Claims Define Over The Cited Reference

As already noted, independent Claims 1 and 4 were both rejected as being unpatentable over Bloom. Bloom is directed to a system and method for efficiently delivering "packages in bulk." (See, e.g., Col. 7, line 66 – Col. 8, line 6.) Applicants respectfully submit, however, that although Bloom discloses the electronic generation of notifications pertaining to bulk package delivery, Bloom fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in Claims 1 and 4.

Initially, Applicants respectfully note that Bloom's "Customer Distribution Center (CDC)" is emphatically not an electronic system that integrates disparate trading partner

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systems, or even disparate customer and trading partner systems. Rather, as described throughout the reference, Bloom's CDC is a bricks-and-mortar entity at a specific geographic location.

Not surprisingly, Bloom does not teach or suggest formatting user-accessible information according to the particular one of multiple communication channels over which the information is conveyed, as recited in Claims 1 and 4. Bloom does not contemplate or address different formats. When discussing formats, Bloom is predominately referring to barcode and package label formats, as explicitly described throughout the reference.

More fundamentally, Bloom does not teach or suggest providing to both a customer and to different trading partners electronic access to information pertaining to a transaction, where the two different classes – customer and trading partners – are treated differently for the sake of data integrity and security enhancement.

Specifically, Bloom does not teach or suggest using a common access platform to provide transaction tracking information to a customer, while simultaneously denying the customer access to trading-partner-specific information, as recited in Claims 1 and 4. With Applicants' invention, different trading partners involved in the same transaction can commonly access electronically-generated transaction analysis information and/or reports, which Bloom fails to provide either expressly or inherently. The same platform used by the trading partners to access transaction analysis information can also be used to by a customer to access transaction tracking information pertaining to the same transaction. This feature, recited in both Claims 1 and 4, is likewise not found in Bloom. Logically it follows that there is no reason, therefore, for Bloom to contemplate the need to deny a customer access to an architectural layer that is accessible to trading partners. Bloom does not teach or suggest providing trading partners access to transaction analysis information and providing a customer access to transaction tracking information via the

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same platform, while denying the customer access to the transaction analysis information or analytical layer, as recited in Claims 1 and 4.
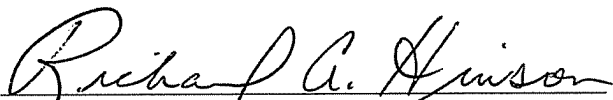
Accordingly, Bloom fails to teach or suggest every feature recited in independent Claims 1 and 4. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that Claims 1 and 4 define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully submit that whereas each of the remaining claims depends from Claim 1 or 4 while reciting additional features, these dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this Application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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